

The Sailors' Snug Harbor, Dormitory (Building B)
Richmond Terrace
New Brighton
New York
Richmond County
New York

HABS No. NY-5475

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
801 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NY-5475

THE SAILORS' SNUG HARBOR, DORMITORY (BUILDING B)

Address: Richmond Terrace, between Tysen Avenue and Delafield Place, New Brighton, New York, Richmond County, New York.

Present Owner: The Trustees of The Sailors' Snug Harbor in the City of New York.

Present Occupant: The Sailors' Snug Harbor.

Present Use: Dormitory.

Statement of Significance: The Sailors' Snug Harbor is a home for aged seamen opened on Staten Island in 1833. This building, constructed from 1839 to 1841, is one of an outstanding group of five Greek Revival dormitories which overlook the Kill Van Kull, leading into New York Harbor.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: See photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473, for this information.
2. Date of erection: In the "Annual Report of the Treasurer of the Sailors' Snug Harbor" for 1839, the disbursements included \$22,256.77 for "Building the West Wing." The "Annual Report" for 1840 indicates that a disbursement of \$13,576.52 was made for "Building the west wing of the asylum." In the "Annual Report" for 1841, \$3,572.72 was disbursed "On account of building the west wing."
3. Original plans and construction: An article in the New-York Evening Post of October 29, 1831, stated that "two wings are to be added" to the center building which was begun in 1831. Thus this "west wing" was part of the original scheme for the institution.
4. Alterations and additions: A view published in Copy of the Will and Testament of the Late Rob't Richard Randall, Esq. . . . in 1842 (see HABS photocopy in photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473) shows that this building had four chimneys on the sides near the corners of the building. These have been removed. This view also indicates that there was no portico at the entrance,

only an unprotected stoop. The stoop was still unprotected in an illustration published in 1876 in Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the Late Robert Richard Randall, Esq. . . . Today there is a stone porch over the steps.

5. Important old views:

- a. Print published in Copy of the Will and Testament of the Late Rob't Richard Randall, Esq. . . . New York: Published by Order of the Trustees, 1842. (See HABS photocopy in photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473).
- b. Print published in Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the Late Robert Richard Randall, Esq. . . . New York: Published by Order of the Trustees, 1876.
- c. In a scrapbook entitled "Views, New York City. Richmond County" there are two views--one from the east, one from the northeast. Local History Room, New York Public Library.
- d. Photograph of dormitory facades. Negative 212023A, Map and Print Room, New-York Historical Society.
- e. Print of "Bird's-Eye View, Of Sailors Snug Harbor, N.Y., A. M. Pettit." Staten Island Historical Society.
- f. Three photographs of dormitory facades, dated "c. 1890." Staten Island Historical Society.

B. Bibliography

Note: See photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473, for additional bibliographical material.

Copy of the Last Will and Testament of the Late Robert Richard Randall, Esq. . . . New York: Published by Order of the Trustees, 1876.

Copy of the Will and Testament of the Late Rob't Richard Randall, Esq. . . . New York: Published by Order of the Trustees, 1842.

Documents of the Senate of the State of New-York. Albany: 1840-1842.

"Sailors Snug Harbor," New-York Evening Post, October 29, 1831, p. 2.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural interest and merit: The Sailors' Snug Harbor is a home for aged seamen opened on Staten Island in 1833. This building, constructed from 1839 to 1841, is one of an outstanding group of five Greek Revival dormitories which overlook the Kill Van Kull, leading into New York Harbor.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Number of stories: Two-and-one-half stories plus full basement above ground level.
2. Number of bays: The front (north) facade is three bays wide; the east and west sides are each eight bays wide.
3. Over-all dimensions: The front and rear facades measure approximately 48'-0"; the sides measure approximately 100'-0".
4. Layout, shape: The building is rectangular in plan.
5. Wall construction, finish and color: The front facade is of stone; the sides and rear are of brick laid up in running bond and painted a light yellow. Exposed stone basement walls are painted gray. There are stone pilasters at the corners of the building and a flat brick frieze on the east and west sides.
6. Porch: One-story, one-bay portico has two Ionic columns and stone balustrade. Nine stone steps lead up to the entrance.
7. Chimneys: Metal smokestack near center of roof.
8. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Wooden paneled door with four-light glass panel in upper section, a five-light rectangular transom and three-light side lights. Wood and glass storm vestibule.
 - b. Windows: Basement windows have three-over-six-light double-hung sash. First and second story windows have six-over-six-light double-hung sash; on the front facade the windows have stone pediments and on the sides the windows have flat stone lintels and sills painted white. Directly beneath the cornice are four-

light casement windows, eight on the east side and nine on the west side; a few of these have been replaced with modern windows with aluminum sash. All other sash is wooden.

9. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Low, gabled roof with modern shingles.
- b. Cornice: Wooden, painted white.

C. Description of Interior

- 1. Floor plans, by floor: Central hallway running north to south is bisected near center by a hallway running east to west. Bedrooms open off north-south hallway.
- 2. Stairway: Fire stairway along east wall next to east-west hallway has metal treads and balusters.
- 3. Flooring: Wooden floors with inlaid star motif at intersection of hallways.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceiling are plastered; walls are painted green, the ceiling white.
- 5. Hardware: Modern hardware.
- 6. Lighting: Fluorescent lights.
- 7. Heating: Central.

D. Site and Surroundings

- 1. Orientation: The front facade faces north. This building is located between the most westerly dormitory (Building A) and the center dormitory and administration building (Building C).
- 2. Sidewalks: Stone.

Note: For photographs of the building see photo-data book for The Sailors' Snug Harbor, HABS No. NY-5473.

Prepared by Diana S. Waite
Architectural Historian
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